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# Disclaimer

This original idea isn't mine, I was inspired by a montly AlterClan Assignment on Warriors Amino, "What if the Dark forest Trainees were exiled or executed".

I am not a part of AlterClan.

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As you can probably tell Warriors does not belong to me, the Clans and Characters belong to the Erin Hunters but the plot of this Wattpad story belongs to me.

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In this AU a few more characters such as Applefur and Sunstrike survives.

As well as some characters including Mintfur died instead.

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Anyway I hope you enjoy this story!

# The "Traitors"

**ThunderClan**

Ivypool: Pale silver and white tabby she-cat with blue eyes

Blossomfall: Tortoiseshell and white she-cat

Birchfall: Light brown tabby tom with amber eyes

Mousewhisker: Grey and white tom with green eyes

Thornclaw: Golden-brown tabby tom

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**ShadowClan**

Tigerheart: Dark brown tabby tom with amber eyes.

Ratscar: Brown tom with yellow eyes and distinctive scars on his back

Applefur: Mottled brown she-cat with green eyes

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**RiverClan**

Minnowtail: Dappled dark grey and white she-cat with amber eyes.

Icewing: White she-cat with blue eyes

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**WindClan**

Breezepelt: Lean, black tom with amber eyes.

Furzepelt: Grey and white she-cat

Larkwing: Pale brown tabby she-cat

Harespring: Brown and white tom.

Whiskernose: Light brown tom

Sunstrike: Tortoiseshell she-cat with a large white mark on her forehead.

# [1] Icewing

The air was still and calm with no hint of a breeze. The full moon shone on the warriors of all clans that were gathered in a circle around Icewing and the other Dark Forest trainees. The leaders stood on the branches of the tree like they always do but this time sitting next to eachother, heads low in a discussion.

The deputies sat on the roots while the medicine cats sat on the grass below. Jayfeather, Lionblaze and Dovewing in front of them, facing her. The three ThunderClan felines were parts of a phrophcey, the cats claimed to have powers.

The white molly's deep blue eyes were wide in fear as she stared up at the four leaders who were quietly discussing her fate.

Well, not only her fate but all the other cats who trained in the Dark Forest. Cats who trained with monsters such as Tigerstar and Brokenstar who persauded them all to fight against the clans.

Icewing's heart twisted in sorrow as she remembered her son, Beetlewhisker who had started training in the Dark Forest to spend time with her. Her head drooped as she recalled when Brokenstar ripped out his throat when Beetlewhisker turned on the dead leader.

"We have decided." Bramblestar called to the gathered cats.

Icewing's head jerked up as she gazed up hopefully at Blackstar, the next cat to speak.

The broad, white tom's black ear twitched as his yellow gaze raked through the huddle of Dark Forest trainees.

"Cats of all clans. We have agreed a punishment for the cats who trained for the Dark Forest. They betrayed their clans, conspired with the enemy to destroy our way of life. They are too unpredictable to live, what if something like this happens again?

Who's side will they be on?" Blackstar announced before narrowing his eyes at Tigerheart, Ratscar and Applefur.

"We know that! What *is* the punishment!" A tom loudly snapped somewhere outside the ring.

Icewing held her breath. The whole gathering was silent.

"They will be executed!" Blackstar answered.

Icewing heard a low moan of despair from Dovewing and the gathering burst into commotion.

Icewing glanced at Grasspelt. The brown tom looked away.

"What?!" Ivypool snarled, jumping to her paws, she was a grey and white tabby she-cat. "We all came to our senses and fought for the clans!"

"What about Breezepelt?" a pale brown WindClan she-cat retorted. "He fought with the Dark Forest until the very end!"

Icewing glanced over to see the ebony tom return the she-cat's glare but his jaw was tightened.

"Any cat who has ever trained in the Dark Forest, even for one night are traitors!" Onestar yowled.

Lionblaze look visibly uncomfortable at the pale, brown tabby's words. *Thats odd. I wonder why...*

"**Silence!**" Blackstar yowled. He waited for the noise to cease before speaking. "The cats will be executed next moon. Meeting dismissed. The other leaders and I will discuss this further this quarter-moon."

*Oh StarClan. Aren't you going to stop this gathering?*

The sky remained cloudless. A beautiful night. A silent taunt and echo of laughter.

The cats started to leave. The felines from different clans parted. Icewing brushed against Minnowtail, a dappled grey and white she-

cat, another cat who trained in the Place of No Stars.

Icewing crossed the log-bridge feeling gloomy, her pace slowing once her paws touched the grass on the other side.

She scanned the group of RiverClan warriors for Grasspelt. Her son was walking to the left of her.

Icewing tried to move towards him but the tom fliched away, instead turning away to walk next to Mallownose, a light brown tabby tom.

*If Beetlewhisker and Mintfur was still alive he wouldn't be acting like this.* Icewing felt a stap of guilt pierce her heart.

With a sinking feeling in her chest her strides faltered. Other cats overtook her. Eager to get home.

"What's going to happen to us?" Minnowtail wailed cathing up with the white molly. "Will anyone stick up with us?"

Icewing shook her head, eyes clouded. "I doubt it. Mistystar probably didn't even try."

*If Mistystar and Grasspelt have lost hope in me then I have no chance.*

# [2] Ivypool

It was a quarter of moon since the gathering. None of the other warriors even wanted to look at her.

Bramblestar had come back from the second meeting. Now she knew how she would be executed.

"I'm sorry. I tried my best to argue against this but it's been decided." Her leader's words rang in her ears. "

Ivypool paced the clearing. Her burning anger boiled in her stomach, still intense as when she heard the news of her execution as she whipped her chin up to face Lionblaze who guarded the entrance of the leader's den as the dark brown tabby was inside discussing matters with his deputy and medicine cats.

"Why won't you help us!" The molly begged. "Stand up for us! Please!"

The magnificent golden tabby shook his head. "I won't help you. Leader's word is law. I don't want to disobey Bramblestar."

"Please! You know I risked my life spying on the Dark Forest!" Ivypool's white and grey tabby tail flicked from side to side in distress.

"I can't help you." Lionblaze repeated sternly.

"What about Hollyleaf?" Ivypool's desperation transformed into sudden anger. "She died saving me. If I die then she would of died for nothing!"

Lionblaze's amber eyes flashed with suprise before narrowing into slits. "My sister died serving her clan." he rumbled before storming off.

Ivypool was about to follow her before she felt a tail on her shoulder. The she-cat snapped her head to the side to see Birchfall

"There's no point quallering." her father sighed. "Other cats are watching us, Ivypool. Let's go."

"Alright Birchfall. I'll go back to the '**traitors den**'." Ivypool taised her voice which was laced with sarcasm.

Giving Lionblaze a final scowl the feline stalked away, long tail lashing. Birchfall trailed after her.

"You really shouldn't be acting like this." The pale brown tabby mumbled quietly.

"Why shouldn't I?" Ivypool retorted. "We chose our clans against the Dark Forest and now we're going to get executed!"

Across the camp Ivypool could see her and her father's den, it was a small curve in the stone walls of the camp. Mousewhisker was napping in the shade while Blossomfall was staring longingly at the exit of the camp as a small hunting party departed through the brambles. Perhaps she wanted to hunt too, or escape the clan.

That didn't matter. Ivypool felt her mood brighten slightly and her heart thump loudly in her chest upon seeing the tortoiseshell she-cat. The silver and white molly sat down beside her friend.

"I wish we could hunt!" Blossomfall complained. "All we're allowed to do is stay in camp but no one wants to talk with us! I tried chatting with Mousewhisker but now he's asleep!" She flicked her tail in annoyance at sleeping grey and white tom.

Ivypool nodded. "The sound of the birds is so tempting!" She agreed, giving up trying to ignore the birdsong that echoed around camp. "Have you tried talking to Bumblestripe, Briarlight, Millie or Greystripe today?"

"No." Blossomfall's voice was miserable. "I've talked to Briarlight a few times in the last few days but Millie is too busy fussing over her. Greystripe's on patrols as if none of this happened and Bumblestripe is mooning over Dovewing as usaul."

"I'm sorry to hear that." Ivypool's blue eyes were round in sympathy. "I've managed to talk with Whitewing... and Birchfall of course but

Dovewing is disapearing out of camp again."

Ivypool knew that her sister was sneaking out of camp to visit Tigerheart. Was the dark brown tabby also confined to the walls of his own camp?

Suddenly Blossomfall looked irritated and lashed her tail violently.

Ivypool flinched back in shock. "Did I upset you?" the molly asked, worried that mentioning that some of her family had shared-togunes with her unlike the tortoiseshell had set her friend off.

"No, Ivypool." Blossomfall clenched her teeth in frustration. "It's just killing or attacking your own clanmates is against the warrior code which our clanmates claim we did. Which is true but if they kill us they'll be as bad as the Dark Forest who attacked innocent cats, we may not be innocent but we deserve a second chance. Not even StarClan will aid us"

The tortoiseshell got to her paws. "I'm sorry Ivypool. I just need to stretch my legs and walk around camp. I'm feeling stressed and hopeless."

Ivypool lay down, her head on her paws as she watched her friend as padded around the bramble dens.

Suddenly Dovewing walked into the camp through the dirtplace tunnel. The fluffy grey molly turned her head in her sistet's direction. Dovewing's green eyes seemed to shine with stars. The she-cat mouthed something.

*What?*

Relization hit Ivypool like a blow to the head.

"I will help you. Meet me behind the elder's den this moonhigh."

# [3] Harespring

Harespring felt pelts pressing against him as they were shoved along the moor. The Dark Forest trainees heads were drooped in despair.

Harespring knew all about their fates. Onestar had tried to hide the news from them but the young warrior had been informed by Heathertail.

*Our leaders and deputys are going to be the ones to kill us.*

Soon the long, light grass of the seemingly endless moorland turned into shorter, thicker vegetation as they neared the gathering island. Harespring and the others were guided across the log-bridge and into a hollow under a tree.

Icewing and Minnowtail, two RiverClan warriors and Tigerheart, Ratscar and Applefur, three ShadowClan warriors were already inside. The six warriors squeezed through the entrance.

The den smelled strongly of soil.

And cats.

The white and brown tom blinked apologetically at Minnotail after stepping on her tail. Chatter broke out in the group.

"I can't believe we're going to be killed on StarClan's gathering grounds!" Ratscar growled.

"StarClan abandoned us, remember!" Breezepelt snapped from behind Harespring.

Not long after ThunderClan had also brought their cats. Harespring tried to shuffle backwards to give the ThunderClan warriors more room, resulting in a yelp of pain from Breezepelt.

Harespring heard Thornclaw grunt uncomfortably as he was pressed

beside him.

"I thought you're used to tight spaces Thornclaw." the chestnut and white tom remarked.

"Yes, but not like this!" the dark golden tabby replied. "Especially not beside a WindClan warrior!"

Harespring sighed, shaking his head. "I would prefer to be in an open moor to this old fox den."

Thornclaw snorted, muttering something about 'rabbit-chasers' as he tried to move away

There was mumbles from outside. Harespring strained his ears to try to hear.

"Dovewing, Whitetail. Guard the entrance and make sure no cat escapes." he could revognise Bramblestar's deep voice as he instructed the two warriors.

"Yes Bramblestar." The two warriors answered.

*Dovewing! Ivypool's sister!*

He tried to scan his gaze over the felines to find Ivypool.

He found her. The scarred molly's lake-blue eyes gleamed as they met his.

"Sunstrike. Mousewhisker." Bramblestar called into the den.

The grey and white tom and the tortoiseshell she-cat obeyed, squeezing out the den. Harespring had never seen any cat look so hopeless in his life.

The den feel quiet as the prisoners realized Mousewhisker and Sunstrike weren't coming back.

Suddenly there was a loud screech from Dovewing.

**"Fox!"**

# [4] Applefur

Applefur stared through a gap between two tree roots, she could see bushes and the two warriors guarding them

"**Fox!**" Dovewing screeched hurling herself on top of Whitetail whos suprised shriek was cut off as she thumped against the soil**.** "**Run!**"

"Go! Go!" Ivypool yelled shoving a RiverClan cat ahead of her with her shoulder.

Cats poured out the den like rabbits from a warren. WindClan cats at the front. Applefur huffed for air as she caught up with Ivypool. The ShadowClan warrior's mottled chestnut fur bristled in fear and perhaps in excitment and the thrill of escaping. Tearing through bushes and grass as the air was loud with screeches of cats and crows squaking as they launched themselves into the sky.

The escapees streaked towards the log-bridge but multiple pelts blocked their way including Dawnpelt who glared at them with narrowed eyes, fury burned in their green depths. Tigerheart suddenly halted causing Applefur to crash into him.

"I'm sorry Dawnpelt." Tigerheart threw himself at his sister, knocking her off the log.

Dovewing screeched in horror as the two littermates plummeted into the lake with a loud splash and a thick spray of water.

"Get moving Dovewing!" Ivypool snapped. "He'll be alright."

"He can't swim!" The grey she-cat cried staring down at the dark, sloshing water. There was no hint of the two cats

As if on command Applefur saw Icewing dive into the lake.

Finally Dovewing started to move. All of the warriors crossed the bridge and the WindClan cats dashed ahead once their pads touched their beloved moor.

The other cats struggled to catch up with the lean felines but Harespring swerved towards the shore. His warriors slowing down.

"We'll rest here for a few minuites." Harespring ordered. "Who's missing?"

The felines looked around.

"Sunstrike and Mousewhisker were taken away." Furzepelt mewed.

"Icewing and Tigerheart are in the lake." Minnowtail added.

"Dovewing's gone!" Ivypool yelled in shock, her blue eyes searching for the grey molly.

Applefur saw shapes moving across the moor out the corner of her eye.

*Six. Too many to be Icewing, Dovewing and Tigerheart.*

"We need to get moving." Applefur broke into a brisk walk. "There's cats coming."

"What about the others?" Birchfall protested.

"I don't want to be murdered." Applefur said defiantly. "Anyone coming with me?"

All the cats nodded hesitantly. Birchfall gave the gathering island and then the final long look before mumbling. "Alright. Let's leave."

"Where should we go?" Whiskernose, a pale brown tom asked.

"I remember Willowshine saying that there's a path up to the moonpool, and beyond it is a moor." Minnowtail piped up.

"I can lead us there." Breezepelt spoke up. "I know where it is."

"Breezepelt! You must be mistaken!" Harespring stared at the black tom. "You're not a medicine cat! How in StarClan have you been to the Moonpool?"

"It's... complicated." The lean tom flicked his long tail. "Come on."

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Applefur flopped onto her side onto the cool grass.

More cats slumped beside her but Breezepelt, Ivypool and others remained on their paws.

"We need to keep moving!" Thornclaw snapped clawing up tufts of grass.

"We've walked for ages!" Furzepelt protested as she flicked her tail towards the full moon and inky black sky. "And it's night!"

"Our clans might come after us!" The golden tom growled.

"I doubt it Thornclaw." Blossomfall sat down, flicking her white ear dismissively. "They won't waste their time hunting us down. And there's a gathering."

"And if they do come we've got Harespring and Birchfall on guard." Larkwing pointed out.

Thornclaw relaxed a little. "What about hunting?"

"We can hunt in the morning." Applefur replied, curling up to muffle sounds of the ThunderClan warrior's complaints and Ratscar's snores.

"I hear Harespring talking." Larking suddenly perked up, ears twitching. "And pawsteps."

Applefur got to her feet, unsheathing her claws that gleamed in the moonlight as the sharp scent of blood hit her nose. She edged further towards the source of the noise.

"Icewing! You made it!"

# [5] Icewing

Icewing felt the impact of the water hit her as she dived in.

It was dark shade of blue, and cold but peaceful.

Searching for a dark tabby pelt she gazed around in the darkness until she caught the sight of a tangle of cats.

Tigerheart was desperately trying to rip himself free from his sister's grip, the cream she-cat was too occupied to realize she was sinking too. Icewing swam deeper, eventually catching up with the littermates who's struggles were getting weaker.

Fastening her teeth around the dark tabby's scruff and catching Dawnpelt with a white paw Icewing kicked her hind legs to push herself upwards but she realised the Shadowclan warriors were too heavy, she was beginning to sink. Suddenly there was a starry presence beside her.

Gazing up at his brown pelt and beautiful blue eyes she recognised him immediately.

*Beetlewhisker! Please help me!*

"You have to choose, Icewing." Beetlewhisker told her.

*I can't! They both need to be saved!*

She moaned in hopelessness, a trail of bubbles rising above her head.

"Or you'll drown too. There are cats above the surface that need your help." Beetlewhisker continued.

All determination was sapped from the molly, and now her energy was disappearing too.

The RiverClan warrior had made her decision. She had seen the cry

of distress in Dovewing's voice that drove the white molly to try to save Tigerheart.

She had to save Tigerheart.

Icewing gazed down at the pale she-cat.

*I'm sorry Dawnpelt.*

The white she-cat's blue eyes were round in sorrow as she released Tigerheart's sister from her grasp. Icewing eventually kicked her legs again and rose upwards.

The dawn-coloured molly sank into the shadows.

*Look after her Beetlewhisker.*

The blue, became lighter and Icewing caught a glimpse of another cat diving into the water.

*Reedwhisker.*

The dark grey tom seam deeper towards Dawnpelt but then stopped.

*He knows it's too late.*

Her white head broke the surface.

*StarClan please forgive me.*

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Icewing pounded her paws against Tigerheart's chest.

The brown tabby tom's amber eyes snapped open and he burst into a coughing fit.

"He's alive!" Mousewhisker sighed with relief beside her. The grey and white tom had escaped from his execution, bearing a deep cut on his shoulder. The same couldn't be said about Sunstrike, who had met her demise at the bloodied claws of her leader.

"Dawnpelt... is she okay?" the ShadowClan warrior spluttered.

Icewing and Mousewhisker shared a devastated glance.

"I'm so sorry Tigerheart. She didn't make it." Mousewhisker's voice was somber.

The ShadowClan warrior's shoulders slumped at the news.

"We need to get going." Icewing mumbled.

"What about Dovewing?" Tigerheart climbed shakily to his paws, Icewing moved quickly to support him.

"I don't know." Mousewhisker answered, pressing against the tabby's other side.

"We need to leave the island." Icewing repeated. The air was filled with a sharp tang of blood. The greenery was now stained a bright crimson and Sunstrikes dead body was covered in the horrific colour.

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The cat's had gathered around the three felines, their eyes wide as they listened to her and Mousewhisker tell the story. Of course Icewing left out the part about leaving Dawnpelt to drown, the cats might react poorly to that.

The ThunderClan tom concluded their speech.

"Come sit down here." Harespring beckoned to the three cats to the empty space beside him and Ivypool.

Icewing nodded, settling down beside the WindClan warrior. Mousewhisker crouched down beside her, crying out softly in pain as he stiffly moved his front leg.

"I'm going to get some rest." The tom's green eyes glistened as another shot of pain rippled up his limb.

"What about Dovewing?" Ivypool asked Icewing. "Did you see her?"

"No." Tigerheart answered. "I suspect she went home."

"Good night." Harespring rose to his paws. "Ivypool is taking next guarding shift."

Icewing's eyes closed. Mentally prepared for the wave of nightmares that she was convinced will come for her.

# [6] Ivypool

Ivypool stretched her legs as she trudged down the slope toeards the small dip into the ground that the group had settled for the nigh.

Dovewing's departure had puzzled her. Wouldn't she have stayed to help Tigerheart?

*I can see the clan's territories from here. I hope Dovewing isn't punished badly.*

The silver and white molly shivered as the cold morning dew soaked the fur between her toes.

The other cats were getting to their paws. Yawning and arching their backs. Mousewhisker's lip curled in pain as he stood up, dark blood trickling from his wound.

"We need to get moving." Harespring called. "And find somewhere to live."

A crowd had gathered around the brown and white tom.

*He's changed a lot since the Great Battle. It's changed us all.*

"Ivypool and I have discussed about this on duty and decided two options but we can vote on other suggestions too." Harespring continued. "We can find a home near the clans in case they need help or want us back, option two is to get as far as we can from the clans in case they hunt us down or see us as hunting competition."

The cat's broke into a chatter that was silenced by Harespring.

"If you want to stay with the clans go over to that boulder over there." he pointed at the massive rock that cast a shadow over the felines. "And if you want us to get away from the clans go to that stream."

The crowd exchanged confused looks before obeying the WindClan warrior, weaving past eachother to get to their chosen object.

Harespring sat down and immediately Ivypool did the same. Gazing around she spotted familiar pelts like Thornclaw and Applefur wanting to leave and Blossomfall and Minnowtail wanting to stay.

The cats settled down again and Harespring stood up, opening his mouth to speak but was interrupted by a yowl.

"Wait! Don't leave yet!"

Dovewing dashed over with Whitewing, Nightcloud, Hazeltail, Grasspelt and other cats bearing prey and herbs, settling them down a pile between the two sides.

Ivypool's blue eyes were wide in surprise as she ran over to her sister and mother, Birchfall at her heels.

"Whitewing..." the pale brown tabby mumbled as he touched noses the white she-cat.

"Dovewing! You came back!" Ivypool yelped in shock.

"Yeah! Of course I would! I managed to bring these cats to say goodbye to their kin."

Ivypool's gaze sweeped the dip. She could see Icewing talking with Grasspelt, Nightcloud nuzzling Breezepelt and other cats reuniting with their kin.

*Some of their kin didn't come...*

Ivypool spotted a huddle of felines away from all the others, she recognised Blossomfall, Thornclaw, Harespring, Ratscar, Applefur and some others gazing longingly at the chattering groups of cats. A wave of pity immediately rose in Ivypool's chest, none of their kin turned up.

"I'm going to speak with Tigerheart." Dovewing mumbled, padding away.

"What happened when we escaped?" Ivypool turned to her mother. "How did you find us?"

"Well from what I know Dawnpelt's body was fished out the lake, Dovewing came to me and a few others to meet her at the WindClan border at sunrise. We met up with WindClan and RiverClan cats and followed your scent." Whitewing flicked her fluffy, white tail.

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The atmosphere in the temporary camp went from cheerful and chatty to quiet and somber.

The sun was slowly climbing the sky. The visiting cats glanced anxiously at the sky.

*They all know we have to go..*

Crowfeather raised his tail in a signal. "Our clans are probably wondering where we are. From the leaders' reactions on your escape I think you should travel away from here. Just to be saf-"

Breezepelt interrupted him. "How do you know what's best? You could just be chasing us away because we're traitors!"

"Breezepelt." Crowfeather's voice turned stern. "As deputy of WindClan I kept my eye on Onestar and he has reacted poorly to your escape. I don't want to end up being the one to kill you. I just want to keep you safe. I don't want to lose you too."

Ivypool glanced at Nightcloud who said nothing.

Breezepelt scowled at Crowfeather and then spun around and stormed off.

The WindClan deputy waved his tail, beckoning his warriors over. "Goodbye Breezepelt, I'm doubtful it would ever happen but I hope our paths cross again one day."

The WindClan cats disappeared over the hill and RiverClan left shortly after.

"We need to go." Whitewing muttered. "I'd love to stay for longer but Bramblestar will be wondering where we are."

The ThunderClan warriors were getting ready to leave but Dovewing stayed where she was.

"I'm going with them." Dovewing insisted.

The ThunderClan warriors just nodded.

"Whitewing, come with us. Our family can be whole again!" Birchfall begged the green-eyed white molly.

"I'm sorry my love." Whitewing nuzzled him one final time. "I have to stay with ThunderClan.

"Goodbye..." Birchfall finally stepped away. "We'll meet again in StarClan."

The ThunderClan patrol padded away down the hill and towards their forest.

# [7] Harespring

Thank you guys for 100 reads! It means a lot to me that people enjoy this story!^^

This chapter is a bit shorter unfortunately

---

Harespring's stomach was still full from the rabbit his patrol brought, the felines padded through an open field.

Hurt still stabbed his chest, none of his family or friends turned up. He had to hold himself together to prevent a sob of pain while he witnessed the bittersweet reunions of some of the other warriors.

He glanced sideways and saw Breezepelt. The black tom's narrow head was drooped and his thin pelt spiked with anger.

"Why did you talk back to Crowfeather like that?" Harespring asked, already knowing the answer.

"Isn't it obvious?" The ebony tom snapped. "He doesn't care about me. I don't care about him."

"He didn't want to lose you." Harespring pointed out. "He said he wanted to keep you safe."

"I guess." Breezepelt shrugged.

"You should at least be grateful he came to visit you!" The brown and white tom heard a dark edge his words.

"I had Nightcloud." Breezepelt amber eyes narrowed. "The cat who actually loved me."

"Nightcloud raised you to be a self-pitying, attention-seeking, stuck up excuse of a cat!" Harespring rebuked. "Heathertail definitely deserved better!"

"How dare you!" Breezepelt let out an outraged roar, slamming a paw against Harespring's head that sent him tumbling down the slope.

Harespring landed on his side and immediately Breezepelt was on top of him, pinning his face down into the grass with a dark, front leg while raking his white belly with sharp hind claws.

Harespring let out a muffled growl, feeling his own blood stain his belly fur.

"For StarClan's sake Breezepelt!" Ivypool snarled, padding over, probably alerted by the stench of blood. "Let him go! We have no time for petty quarrels!"

Harespring winced as Breezepelt's unsheathed front claws dug deeper into his cheek. The dark tom said nothing.

Ivypool's slender tail whipped from left to right. "Didn't you hear me?" her voice rose to a shout. "Let him go!"

Pain sparked in Harespring's cheek and stomach as his clanmate released his grip from him.

Standing up Breezepelt's voice deepened into a growl. "Don't talk to me again!"

Harespring struggled to his paws as Ivypool brushed beside him.

"Are you okay?" she asked. "What should we do about him?"

Harespring gazed from Breezepelt storming off in the distance to the red blood dripping from his belly.

"I'm alright. We're both just tired and irritable." The tom assured the ThunderClan warrior.

"Alright." Ivypool trotted away to catch up with Birchfall.

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The sky was a rosy violet as the cats slowed down to a stop, they

group and found an abandoned fox den to spend the night in and was now sharing the two rabbits that. Breezepelt and Whiskernose had caught.

They had barely been travelling for a day but there wss already a chatter about creating a new life.

Harespring sat in the yawning mouth of the den. He shifted slightly closer to the nearest huddle of cats, pain pricking at his wounds, his tall ears pricked to listen to the conversation between Thornclaw, Blossomfall and Mousewhisker who lay close by, rabbit rib bones scattered at their paws.

"Once we find a new place to live." The golden tabby was trying to convince pointed out to his clanmates. "We possibly create a new clan with lots of unique rules and laws, devide up duties and possibly find a medicine cat."

"Alright *Thornstar*." The grey and white warrior gave his clanmate a mock bow of his head. "Whatever you say, mighty leader."

"LostClan might be a good name." Blossomfall pondered aloud.

Harespring knew they could never become a clan.

"All cats to me!" He called, darting deeper into the den. "I'm hosting a meeting!"

# [8] Applefur

Next week's chapter might get delayed for a few days. I hope you enjoy this chapter!

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Applefur looked up at Harespring. The young tom sat on a small boulder that stuck out the ground.

"I've heard chatter about creating a new clan..." The WindClan warrior began.

"Who put him in charge?" Breezepelt muttered loudly to no one in particular. "He better not name himself leader!"

"Shut up Breezepelt!" Ratscar growled. "Just listen to him! He might have something useful to say!"

Applefur gazed back up at Harespring who blinked gratefully at the brown tom before continuing. "We can't become a clan, we don't have StarClan's blessing so I think we can become a group but we need..." The warrior stopped, shuffling his paws nervously and gazing down blankly at the crowd.

"Go on." Birchfall prompted him.

"We need to abandon StarClan if we want to move on." The WindClan warrior said bluntly. Applefur saw Harespring close his eyes as his words were met with shocked gasps and triumphant yowls.

"Finally!" Breezepelt called out. "He understands!"

"How could we abandon our warrior ancestors?" Dovewing cried.

"Wait!" Icewing, a white she-cat pushed her way to the front and bounded onto the boulder beside Harespring. "Let's vote like this morning."

Several cats nodded slightly, but unconvinced murmurs could still be heard.

Icewing still continued dispite the unenthusiastic tone from her audience. "Raise your tail if you want us to carry on following StarClan."

Applefur raised her brown tail instinctively. Scanning the den with her green gaze she could only see a few tails waving in the air, the majority belonging to the ThunderClan warriors.

"Then it's decided." Icewing mewed. "We will no longer follow StarClan, we will no longer look to them for guidance under any circumstances, or thank us for our prey or the weather. They abandoned us when we needed them most so now it is our turn to turn our backs on them. They are nothing to-"

"Hold on!" Applefur shoved her way to the front. "What if any cats want to carry on believing in StarClan? You can't force them to suddenly forget them! And what about the warrior code?"

"Do you have any ideas on that matter?" Harespring asked.

Applefur nodded.

Icewing shifted across the stone and beckoned Applefur to join her with her fluffy white tail.

The mottled ShadowClan warrior leapt up to join the RiverClan warrior.

She unsheathed her claws to get a better grip on the boulder. To her horror her claws skidded uselessly around as she lost her balance. Her tail lashing in panic.

Her ears were hot in embarrassment as she regained her balance.

*Oh Starclan! I hope they don't see me as a stupid kit!*

"We need a new warrior code." Applefur began. "Instead of starting it from scratch we could keep certain rules like only killing prey for food and not putting any kit in danger."

"Instead of segregating ourselves into our four clans we need to reunite into one. We are no longer RiverClan, ShadowClan, ThunderClan or WindClan warriors." Icewing continued. "Our home clans are forgotten. Like Harespring said earlier we can't form a new clan, but we will stay as a group."

"So we'll just be a band of rogues?" Mousewhisker frowned.

"Not any band of rogues." The white molly assured the tom. "A lawful group of rogues."

"Icewing! Applefur!" Most of the cats below the boulder cheered on the two she-cats.

As Applefur gazed the felines she could spot a few warriors looking unhappy at her and Icewing's speech.

"*We will no longer follow StarClan."*

Icewing's words echoed in her ears. Applefur closed her eyes as a ripple of sadness washed over her.

*Tallpoppy and Toadfoot are no longer with me. They're with StarClan. If I turn my back on StarClan I'll be abandoning them too.*

# [9] Icewing

Sorry its been a whole month since the last chapter! I'm feeling much better and ready to work on this again!

Thank you guys for over 400 reads and all the lovely comments! It means a lot to me that people enjoy my writing!^^

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Icewing tried not to puff out her chest in pride as the cats below her yowled in approval, their eyes glimmering in hope.

*Does Mistystar feel like this when she hosts meetings?*

With horror she realized she was thinking about her clan.

Her *former* clan.

"Meeting dismissed." Harespring called, jumping down. "We need to be ready for tomorrow."

As the cats padded away Harespring beckoned Icewing over with his tail.

"Great speech! I hope you'll hold more meetings soon." His voice was friendly and filled with admiration.

"Thanks!" Icewing yawned, "Goodnight! I'll see you tomorrow! I'll guard the den."

"Are you sure?" The dark brown and white tom's voice softened, "You need sleep too."

"I'll sleep later." Icewing said curtly.

*I don't think I can sleep. I remember hearing that ShadowClan warrior, Dawnpelt, drowned because of me.*

The tom paded away into the darkness, giving her one last twitch of his ear.

Icewing trotted to the entrance of the den, away from the others.

The loud chatter eventually quietened into soft murmurs as cats settled down.

Icewing gazed outside. The fat moon was now blocked by three particular fluffy clouds...

...

"Icewing!" A familiar voice rang in Icewing's ears as she whipped around to see her kit .

Beetlewhisker padded up to her purring, and rubbed her cheek with his own, starlight glittering on his brown and white fur.

Around them was a moorland rolling into the horizon, as far as her blue eyes can see. Clear, bubbling rivers snaked across the earth. All which glowed like stars.

"Am I in StarClan?" she asked her son.

"Yes." He answered before hurriedly continued. "But you're not dead."

"When I saw you when I was rescuing Tigerheart, your pelt wasn't sparkling. "What happened?" she blurted out.

"After the great battle some cats made it to StarClan like Firestar and Hollyleaf of ThunderClan. They had fulfilled their destinies and made peace with their loved ones before dying." The dead warrior mewed. "Some of us were forced to stay, held back... by unfinished purposes, especially those who trained with the Place of No Stars."

"Were you one of them?" The white she-cat breathed.

"Yes. I was terrified, I thought StarClan banished me to the Dark Forest." Beetlewhisker's shoulders slumped before he straightened up again. "But once you made peace with Grasspelt I was freed and

able to go to StarClan."

"I'm so sorry..." Icewing's eyes brimmed with tears.

"I can only hope Mintfur can forgive me. And that Hollowflight and Sunstrike get to go StarClan too." Her son mumbled.

At the mention of her ex mate Icewing burst into tears. "This is all my fault! If I hadn't agreed to train in the Dark Forest you wouldn't of followed me, and Mintfur wouldn't have died!"

"I don't blame you, Icewing." Beetlewhisker's eyes rounded. "We were all manipulated by the Dark Forest."

Icewing sniffed, watching as the glossy brown and white cat turned away.

"I need to go now." There was regret in his voice. "Your group is about to leave, far from the eyes of StarClan. We might not see eachother for a while, perhaps never again."

"No!" Icewing shouted, leaping for her son.

"Promise me you'll help your friends find a safe home." His fur was beginning to merge into the scenery.

It was too late for Icewing, he had faded away as the she-cat hit the ground. She carefully tucked her paws under her.

She wanted so badly for the dream to never end, her and Beetlewhisker to stay here in this beautiful field, just to endlessly talk, run through the grass or swim in the river.

But it wasn't going to happen. She silently vowed to fulfil her son's promise.

# [10] Ivypool

Ok wow! It's been a long time since I've updated this story! I sort of stopped updating the story because of drama and scandals in the Warriors fandom and also for some personal reasons.

But now I'm back and because of the lockdown I should have more time to update this.

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Ivypool rolled her eyes as she stood beside Blossomfall. Harespring had already suggested staying as a group. Everybody seemed happy about it then but were now speaking out.

"We have various options." Tigerheart meowed. "We could find a safe place and then go our separate ways."

"We could become kittypets." Dovewing pointed out.

Ivypool frowned at that answer. "Or loners."

"I think we should stick together." Blossomfall quietly said, "We're used to living in groups."

"I agree with the tortoiseshell." Whiskernose raised his tail.

"We could head back to the old territory." Thornclaw said.

"Wasn't that destroyed by the twolegs?" Breezepelt growled.

"We could use that as a starting point." the golden tom said.

"What about the Tribe of Rushing Water." Birchfall suggested.

"That could be a good place to go." Tigerheart said. "You know where it is Dovewing. Right?"

Dovewing nodded but then shook her head sharply. "No! It isn't

safe! There's eagles!"

Ivypool knew she was thinking about a cat named 'Swoop of the Chestnut Hawk' who had been carried off by an eagle.

"Where should we go then?" Whiskernose asked Dovewing.

The grey cat remained silent.

"I know we shouldn't talk about StarClan... but..."

Everyone turned around to look at Icewing.

"I had a dream last night... It was of my son. He told me he had finally made it to StarClan after Grasspelt and I made peace with one another."

"Did he say anything else?" Birchfall asked.

"He told me to promise him that we will all find somewhere safe to live. Maybe this is our dark time now but one day we'll find our future home and forgive ourselves. Then we'll finally be at peace."

"Anything else?" Blossomfall pressed.

"He said that we'll travel far away where StarClan will no longer reach us. It's probably for the best."

The cats remained silent for a while before Breezepelt spoke up. "Well that doesn't help us much."

"Perhaps we should just travel and see where we go." Blossomfall suggested.

Ivypool immediately nodded glancing away shyly as she locked eyes with her friend.

"That's an awful idea!" Breezepelt shouted. "We'll end up walking into a fox den!"

Blossomfall ducked her head in embarrassment as the silver and white molly glared at the tom.

"Any better ideas?" Ivypool retorted.

Breezepelt lashed his tail but didn't reply.

"But we should go through the mountains." Tigerheart protested. "Dovewing! You did mention a cat named Stormfur, right?"

"Yes. But I don't think it is a good idea..."

"We can't stay here!" Blossomfall argued. "The den is too small and we'll be running out of prey soon."

"We could dig more dens!" Breezepelt snarled.

"Not all of us want to get our paws dirty for a den that will flood in newleaf!" Blossomfall shouted.

The black tom lept at the tortoiseshell she-cat who unsheathed her claws as the tom landed on top of her.

Freaking out Ivypool ripped Breezepelt off her and dragged him out the den as everyone watched.

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"What was that for?" Ivypool snarled at him.

"She's going to kill us all!" Breezepelt snapped, crouching down.

Before Ivypool could react the ebony cat barreled into her. Sending them both down a hill.

Ivypool slashed his ear as he pinned her down.

"I'm going to kill you!" he threatened.

"Do it then!" Ivypool snapped back. "Take it out on me that you have nobody you love left. Heathertail deserves way better than you! I bet she is glad that you are gone!"

Before the ex-WindClan warrior could go for her throat there was a blinding flash and the two cats where knocked away by a blast of wind.

As the flash disappeared a faded tabby silver cat stood between them. Two silver eagle wings were spread out above her head.

"Wha-"

"Who are you?!"

One look at those peaceful blue eyes were enough to melt away all the anger in the she-cat's body.

"My name is Feathertail. I was one of the cats who found the lake territories. "Along with your father." She nodded at Breezepelt who looked shocked.

"I know you both only want the best for your group." Feathertail took a deep breath of the morning air as she sat down. Breezepelt crept closer, his amber eyes still narrowed with suspicion but had a glimmer of curiosity in their depths.

"But you don't know where to go." She turned to him.

She lifted her feathery tail under Breezepelt's chin and made him face the rising sun in the distance. "We followed the dying warrior to reach the lake. Now it's your turn. Follow the rising warrior, then you'll find where you belong."

There was the noise of loud paws running downhill as Feathertail faded. Giving Ivypool one last smile she faded. Breezepelt's chin dropped and the two cats stared at eachother in bewilderment.

As they looked behind them they could see the other cats behind them.

"Who was that?"

"What did she say?"

"She didn't look like a StarClan warrior."

Breezepelt stood up to explain, his fur still fluffed up with shock.

"Follow the sun!" Ivypool yelped.

# [11] Harespring

Apologies for another short chapter after a month of not updating! I've had a lot of work from schools since two weeks ago! But still, thank you so much for the support of this story!

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"Are you alright?" Harespring asked his clanmate.

Breezepelt had a faraway look in his yellow eyes, blood was still running down his ear from when Ivypool fought back.

"Yeah... Meeting Feathertail was just... weird."

"Breezepelt still looks off." Furzepelt flicked her tail.

"Definetely!" Mousewhisker nodded as he walked beside the grey and white she-cat.

Harespring gazed curiously at the Furzepelt. She and Mousewhisker seemed to be chatting more...

*No. I shouldn't be sticking my nose in other cat's businesses.*

He instead focused on the black tom who was walking beside him.

"She definitely wasn't a StarClan cat." The wiry tom continued. "With eagle wings like that, I reckon she came from the mountains."

"Did you hear about her before?" The white and brown tom asked.

"My father mentioned her a few times, she died saving him and he named himself after her," Breezepelt answered. "I've met and talked with Stormfur when Crowfeather took me to the mountains, he susp-, knew that they were more than friends. And Crowfeather talks in his sleep, I wish he talked about me and Nightcloud as fondly as he spoke of Feathertail and Nightcloud." His voice softened

There was an uncomfortable silence as the two sped up to avoid the gossiping of Furzepelt and Mousewhisker.

"Why... Why did you train to the Dark Forest?" The blue-eyed tom inquired.

"You first." The tom countered, by the look on Breezepelt's face, the black tom had put the invisible walls back up.

"It's simple. I wanted power and influence, Tigerstar offered it and I took it. My family weren't close to me, I didn't even know which tom was my father!" Harespring explained. "You?"

"Everything was falling apart. I needed an escape." He replied

"Was it the relationship between your parents? Or Heathertail? I know you loved her very much."

"Yes. All Nightcloud wanted was kits and Crowfeather... well he wanted either Leafpool or Feathertail." Breezepelt then hissed under his breath. "I thought Heathertail loved me but then Lionblaze came along!"

Harespring listened to the tom's angry rant and nodded when he finished. "Maybe Feathertail could give you closure?"

"Yeah, I'll ask if she appears again. I doubt it though. It's just a feeling though."

"I know we have different views on things but can we be friends again?.. Like when we were apprentices before the Dark Forest ruined everything?" Harespring asked.

"Alright." Breezepelt nodded. "I may as well be more friendly to everyone now that I'm travelling with them."

"You won't like this but you should try talking to Ivypool, you two seem to have a lot in common even though you might not want to believe it. You should apologise to her too."

Breezeelt looked outraged for a second before dipping his head. "Yeah... I'll head over now."

The two of them slowed down as everyone else caught up. Harespring slipped beside Furzepelt.

The grey and white she-cat looked embarrassed and ashamed but was blushing as she glanced over at Mousewhisker who was discussing something with Icewing. The ex-ThunderClan tom's face was serious for once but gazed back at her with the same warmth as the greenleaf sun.

"You've been up to anything?" Harespring asked her.

"Just walking... and talking with Mousewhisker." The grey and white cat looked worried.

"You look anxious... Are you okay?" He asked.

"It's just... "I'm still instinctively following the warrior code." She tried to explain. "It feels wrong talking to him like that, with that warmth.."

"It's okay." Harespring reassured her. "We're one small clan now, and anyway, most of us have probably broken the warrior code. Like trespassing on another cat's territory. It will take us a while to get used to it."

"Do you still think of Heathertail." Furzepelt blurted out.

Harespring sighed. Furzepelt had always been the one to stare and gossip. She must of noticed his longing looks towards the brown tabby she-cat while she was an apprentice.

"Nope. That was before the Dark Forest. Ever since I've not been really interested in mates, I'd rather be a good lea-... loving cat to everyone."

Furzepelt immediately looked suspicious and Harespring stared at her blankly.

*Why did I say that?*

"Look, Harespring, I appreciate your advice about Mousewhisker. I'll talk to him now." The blue-green eyed she-cat tried to sound

cheerful but there was an uncomfortable atmosphere between them..

Harespring looked at his paws as Furzepelt bounded to catch up with Mousewhisker who was struggling to hide his happiness of seeing her, Icewing gave the two cats a smug look

The brown and white warrior instead watched Breezepelt and Ivypool. Both were in a civil discussion, but now and again lashing their tails in anger but weren't trying to kill each other.

*Hello Harespring!*

The tom stiffened up, almost stopping in his tracks. He could hear another voice too, this time much deeper and imitating

*We have great plans for you and the exiled.*

# [12] Applefur

Hey guys!

I've been writing a lot recently, I'm working on a Pokemon dystopian region story too. I know not all of you may be Pokemon or dystopia fans but I hope you guys read it once I post it!^^

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For a few days, they had travelled through a cornfield, admiring the tall, rough, green plants and the odd ground. Then over the hill to a farm, narrowly avoiding a tractor and being chased by dogs black and white dogs.

As the sunset the wandered into the barn. Luckily the farm cats were a little friendly and let them stay for a few days to rest and refuel. The grounds the group had travelled didn't have much prey so the cats were hungry. The Farm Cats warned them about a storm approaching, through something called a brightbox.

There many farm cats but the most notable ones were Grits, a grizzly old black and white tom who stayed out the way to instead, watch the travellers nervously and suspiciously from the rafters. Lady, a sweet, plump brown tabby molly with her son Rocky, an-apprentice-age, strong, brown-ginger tabby who was curious of the travellers. And finally Roxxie, a grey she-cat with intense amber eyes, who had taught them how to make nests.

Applfur carried a mouse, noticing Birchfall sitting on his own, listening to the rain lash against the wooden roof. She sat down beside him.

"This seems familiar!" The mottled brown molly chuckled.

Birchfall looked confused but then realisation hit him. "Oh! Barley's barn!"

Applefur took a breath, memories of playing in the hay with Birchfall- no, Birchkit and her brother.

"Applefur, is everything alright?" The light brown tom studied her face. "How's Toadfoot."

"Dead..." Her ears drooped. "Tallpoppy too."

The tom grimaced. "I lost Ferncloud in the battle."

The two felines stared at each other. They had all lost so much in the battle. Many of the ex-trainees had lost direct family, parents, younger littermates... Did the Dark Forest deliberately kill them to punish the cats who turned against them?

*Nope. I'm overthinking this... It's only a coincidence.*

Rocky tumbled over, breaking the tension between the two, straw tangled in his long, orange pelt.

"Hey! What are you two talking about?" The tom asked.

"Something personal." Birchfall nudged the mouse over to him. "Would you like to have some?"

"Thanks!" The tom piped up, taking a big bite. "Are you two mates?"

"No, no, no!" Applefur was flustered. "We're kithood friends."

"I have a mate back in my old home." Birchfall added.

"I'm so sorry!" Rocky squeaked, spitting out pieces of mouse.

"It's alright little one!" Applefur purred, her expression changed as she glanced at her friend.

*I wonder how his mate feels. Her mate and both of her kits left the clan. Why didn't she go with her family?*

The she-cat flicked her torn ear. His mate had plenty of reason to stay. She probably had her parents or didn't like the idea of wandering into the unknown.

"*Or maybe she's loyal to her clan"* a voice hissed in her head.

Applefur turned back to the two toms who were chatting about their favourite prey.

Rocky suddenly froze, the fur rising on his back staring at something behind her.

"Is everything alright, buddy?" Birchfall asked.

Rocky's brown eyes widened and he dug his little claws into the hay bale.

"Is it something in particular?" Birchfall asked. "Or is it just a weird feeling?"

"Something doesn't seen right with one of your friends. I don't like the way he is looking at me or my mother." The young tom stuttered. "He's behind you, Applefur. I don't know his name."

*Must be a cat such as Thornclaw or Ratscar.* She thought to herself. *Both toms were suspicious of the Farm Cats.*

The she-cat strained her neck to glance behind her. She didn't want to look to suspicious it whoever it was.

It was Harespring. He gazed over at the Farm Cats sitting together on the ground by the giant wooden door, watching the first flash of lightning in the distance.

Something seemed off about the tom's green gaze, something *dark* and *hungry* about it.

There was the roar of thunder and another flash of lightning lit up the spot where the brown and white tom sat. But she could swear she two dark shapes remain for a heartbeat.

One was a thin, lean cat with badly torn ears sitting behind Harespring's head. The second was a giant bushy feline, lashing its tail as it stood behind the tom.

As quickly as she spotted them, they were gone as the barn went

dark.

She turned to Birchfall who had the same haunted look on his face, Rocky gazed at them confused.

# [13] Icewing

"Thank you so much! For everything!" Blossomfall yelled to the farm cats.

Other cats joined in. The loners raised their tails in farewell, slipping through the small slant in the door as the wanderers followed the rising sun.

With warm paws and full bellies, they continued their journey. They crossed moors dotted with rabbit holes and molehills

Icewing was caught up in a conversation with Whiskernose about hunting on the moor. Recently the ex-WindClan cats had done most of the hunting, they were the fasted and the most capable.

It was really quite fascinating listening to the tom explain it. She never got the appeal of charging after her prey, sitting quietly by a river, ready to scoop up a fish with a quick paw. But she started to understand the rush and excitement of the chase. They actually stayed civilised, instead of yowling and arguing about who's way of life was better.

Something felt warm and good about the current atmosphere, like lying on a sun-warmed rock. Despite the circumstances almost everyone got along.

The white-furred she-cat let out a loud purr.

"What are you purring at?" The tom asked sternly.

"Well, everyone seems to just be getting along." She answered truthfully. "What do you think about it?"

"Hmm." He huffed "Some of the younger cats are a bit mouse-brained but the other warriors are tolerable. I have no choice anyway."

"Im sure you'll warm up to them eventually." Icewing remarked.

The tom grunted.

Not wanting to walk in an awkward silence or join someone else she attempted to revive the conversation. "If we stopped somewhere to live, where would you go."

"Probably somewhere similar to WindClan camp." He answered. "A flat moor with plenty of prey."

"Hey Icewing! Could I talk to you about something?" Minnowtail called to her.

"Sure." Icewing glanced at Whiskernose who nodded, both cats relieved to escape a dying conversation.

The two ex-RiverClan warriors padded together as Minnowtail dropped back, Icewing followed.

"Did I ever tell you about why I joined the Dark Forest?" The dappled feline's tail drooped.

"No... You haven't actually. Theres no need to feel guilty about it, we all made that mistake." Icewing assured her.

"No, no! Its not that!" She hushed her voice. "I was in love with Mousewhisker and agreed to train with him."

Icewing glanced at the fluffy silver and white tom laughing with Furzepelt. Both cat's steps were in a unnoticed rhythm. Their grey and white fur seemed to melt into one.

"We grew distant and he's fallen for Furzepelt instead." She lamented. "I don't know what to do!"

Icewing sighed. "It must be hard constantly seeing them together."

Furzepelt nodded.

"I believe accepting your feelings is the best thing to do. Your jealousy and sadness are justified but you shouldn't let them turn you sour." She explained. "The worst cats are the ones who act out of jealousy. You are not the first cat to go through this and you

won't ever be the last."

"Right."

"You can grieve what could have been, we all do that. You'll let go one day." Icewing told her. "There are many lovely cats here that would love to get to know you. You will make friends that'll distract you from him."

"Thank you Icewing." Minnowtail perked up a little. "That actually really helped."

"No worries, if you ever need help or just someone to talk to I'll always be here." She gazed at her warmly.

"I'll do that." She returned a smile.

. . . . . .

The rain soaked Icewing's white fur as she pressed against Larkwing.

The cats were squeezed into a small ditch right next to the thunderpath.

"This is no use!" Larkwing exclaimed, shaking a wet brown paw. "We should just cross now."

"Maybe the monsters will go away when it gets dark." Applefur suggested.

"We'll be frozen before that happens." Thornclaw retorted.

The ditch certainly shielded them from the howling gales but not the rain.

The cats murmured in agreement and sighed as a monster zoomed past.

"I remember my father telling me how to cross a thunderpath safely." Birchfall spoke up.

The cats turned to him in shock.

"He told me about how back in the old forest cat's used their paws to feel vibrations on the path." Birchfall explained. "Thornclaw, surely you remember this to? Ratscar"

"Yes." The golden tabby answered.

"If the two of us work together we could get all of this." The tom added.

Thornclaw reluctantly agreed.

"Its too dangerous!" Dovewing protested.

"I know it is. Im willing to risk it." The tom faced his daughter. "We're going to freeze here otherwise."

"If you're willing to take that risk too come with us." We'll wait for whoever chooses to stay but the choice is yours." The golden tabby eyed each cat.

Most cats moved to the two ex-ThunderClan warriors' sides and the last few reluctantly joined them.

Birchfall scrambled up and poked his head over the side. "There's a forest!" He exclaimed.

"Right." Thornclaw announced. "We'll cross the path in waves in pairs or small groups. Who wants to go first."

The cats all hesitated until Breezepelt raised his tail. "I will."

"Okay. Anyone want to join him?"

Harespring raised his tail too along with Larkwing.

Thornclaw nodded and the four cats scrambled up.

Icewing strained her neck to try to see or hear anything. All she could hear was Birchfall yelling "Go!"

The three cats must have ran across as Thornclaw slid back down.

"They made it!" Birchfall called down. The crowd seemed much more accepting of this idea.

"Ratscar, Furzepelt, Whiskernose. You next."

The four warriors scrambled up. They wait was a little longer before the path was free then there was Birchfalls shout and Thornclaw dropped back down.

"They're fine." The ex-ThunderClan tom called.

"Should we go next?" Icewing asked Minnowtail in effort of distracting her from Mousewhisker's expression of relief.

"Icewing, Minnowtail, Applefur."

Icewing scrambled up, her heart pounding. She strained her ears as a roar of a monster flew by.

Birchfall was studying his paw on the path, his eyes shut as Icewing focused her gaze on the path.

"What do we do?" Applefur asked.

"You run as fast as you can." Thornclaw answered, pushing Icewing into a crouch.

Icewing winced, water dripping from her belly fur.

"Go!"

All three cats raced across. The road was gritty and scraped at her pink pads put she refused to stop. Her vison was blurry with fear and water and the ground disappeared under her as she tumbled into a ditch on the other side.

She lay there for a heartbeat before getting to her paws and pulling herself out onto the edge of the forest. She breathed a sigh of relief as the other two she-cats joined her, clambering out behind her.

Peering on the other side she spotted what looked to be Blossomfall and Mousewhisker waiting on the other side. More and more

monsters came whizzing by.

Soon enough they took off. Reliving the rush of fear Icewing's mouth was dry as the cats yelled shouts of encouragement as they dashed across before they too slid into the ditch.

"Which cats are left?" Icewing asked Blossomfall.

"Ivypool, Dovewing and Tigerheart." The tortoiseshell answered. "As well as Thornclaw and Birchfall of course. I hope they'll be okay..."

They turned to gaze back across the thunderpath as the three soaked cats faced them.

# [14] Ivypool

Ivypool gazed at Blossomfall talking to Icewing before forcing herself to focus.

"It'll be you and me next." Thornclaw told Birchfall who nodded in acknowledgement as he was muttering and counting to himself. The older tom turned to continue eyeing the flooded thunderpath.

Ivypool saw Dovewing and Tigerheart pressed together, their tails linked.

"You can't run with your tails *intertwined* you know." She snorted.

The two cats awkwardly moved apart.

"Ivypool." concentrate. Thornclaw snapped.

All five cats flinched as a blue monster passed them. Ivypool grew more and more frightened, her fur bristling. Birchfall noticed her distress.

"You'll be fine." He assured her.

In that moment she was transported back to those days in the nursery. She remembered being scared by nightmares from an elder's story and Birchfall comforting her. Those days when everything was all sunrays and nothing mattered.

Snapping back to reality she blinked. "Thanks."

His gaze jerked up. "Go! Go now!" The three cats took off.

Tigerheart and Dovewing ran as Ivypool overtook them. She spotted a small pothole and narrowly dodged it as a red flash caught her eye.

*Is that a monster?*

Hopefully it was further than she imagined.

Ignoring the burning sensation against her feet as her paws hit wet grass, she leapt over and landed on the slope, digging her claws into the mud as she. She flailed in panic but then someone grabbed her scruff.

"I've got you!" Blossomfall mumbled.

Ivypool relaxed as Blossomfall hauled her up.

"Thank you!" She silver and white feline stammered.

"Anytime!" She shyly smiled.

Tigerheart pushed Dovewing up before following her. Tigerheart shook his scarred pelt as Ivypool licked her scraped pad, gagging at the taste of blood and gravel.

"What's taking them so long?" Breezepelt growled.

Gazing over she saw Thornclaw and Birchfall talking. It seemed like the golden tabby was trying to persuade the younger tom to do something. Even from here she could see her father shaking his head.

Thornclaw crouched and heard Birchfall yelling for him to run. The golden tom hurried across and leaping across the ditch.

"I thought he was coming with you!" Ivypool said.

"He told he it'll be easier if I go first." He answered.

Soon all of their eyes were on Birchfall. A few more monsters roared past. Soon he broke into a run. All the cats yelled in encouragement. Birchfall's gaze jerked up to eye his companions. His body suddenly jolted and he crashed to the ground.

Ivypool shrieked as she realised she tripped on the hole on the thunderpath. "**Get up father!**"

"**There's a monster coming!**" Mousewhisker shouted.

Birchfall gazed her in the eye as he stumbled to his paws, not not quickly enough as there was a loud call from the monster and Birchfall's body dissapeared under one of its round black paws.

The cats started shrieking and Dovewing flopped to the ground sobbing, Tigerheart immediately bent down to comfort her. Frozen in shock, Ivypool soon felt energy return to her viens she darted towards the path.

"Ivypool! Come back!" Thornclaw ordered.

Recognising the flash of Applefur and Icewing's brown and white pelts beside her, the two of the pulled Birchfall's crushed body into the ditch. Dovewing and Tigerheart slipped down to join them as the injured Tom's eyes opened weakly.

"You're both safe..." he wheezed with relief.

Ivypool spluttered for words.

"Applefur, Tigerheart. Come with me." She heard Icewing beckon the two other cats away as they climbed back up to the others.

Tears rolled down Dovewing's face as Birchfall gazed up at her.

"You're not going to die." The grey she-cat said firmly.

"My sweet daughter. Im glad I got to die by your sides instead of rotting away in the elder's den." His eyes started to close. "I'll see Whitewing again. The four of us will meet again one day."

The words finally came to Ivypool.

"I'm so sorry for disappointing you by falling to the Dark Forest." She mumbled.

"You have no reason to." He wheezed. "You convinced the rest of us to fight for the clans when even I couldn't. You're the strongest cat of all the clans and I'm glad you're my daughter."

Ivypool started shaking.

"You saved me Ivypool." He smiled up at her. "Thank you."

The two cats lay down and pressed against him, he let out a purr as his eyes shut and he let out a final shuddering breath and then lay silent.

Both cats were frozen until Dovewing wailed and pressed against their father as Ivypool cried into his fur. They cried what felt like was a whole day until Ivypool sat up.

"We can't stay like this forever." She stated. "We need to bury him."

Dovewing reluctantly agreed. The scarred she-cat grabbed her father's scruff while the darker-furred feline supported the tom's hind legs and tail. The weight was lightened as other cats helped pull the deceased tom up. Both she-cats were greeted with faces of grief and horror.

Ivypool set the body down as padded into the forest. Speeding up her mind whirred, she just needed a moment away from it all. Going deeper and deeper she stumbled across a spot in the trees that let the sunset in. She sat down. Gazing around, there was a ring of birch trees around a small area of nothing but flat grass.

"Are you alright? You just ran off so I came to make sure you didn't get killed or lost." A voice said from behind her.

Ivypool turned around and was surprised when she saw the scarred black pelt of Breezepelt.

"I don't know what came over me." She answered hesitantly. "I just needed to run."

She sat down for several more heartbeats, listening to the final calls of birdsong before they settled to sleep.

*Birchfall probably would have loved this spot.*

"I think this might be a good place to bury him." She admitted to Breezepelt.

He gazed around before his eyes narrowed. "Whatever suits you

forest cats."

Heading back out the two walked until they reached the other cats who were helpless on what to do.

"Come with us." Ivypool told them. "We shouldn't just bury him at the side of a thunderpath.

With four cats helping to carry Birchfall, they made their way through. Ivypool moved branches and brambles aside as she recognised the spot. It was peaceful now, no roaring from the thunderpath, just pattering from the rain.

"Should we bury him?" Ratscar asked.

"We should hold a vigil." Thornclaw answered.

"Isn't that what warriors will do?" Larkwing pointed out.

"If it wasn't for us we would have been freezing and soaked to our bones in that ditch." Thornclaw growled. "We owe him that much."

The cats settled down around Birchfall, with his daughters by his head and cats from other clans hanging back a little.

"Birchfall was always selfless." Ivypool spoke up. "He's probably happier he died helping cats than wasting away in the elders den."

Cats nodded silently in agreement.

Dovewing spoke next. "He was a loving father and I don't know what kind of cat I would be without him."

They sat for a little longer, Thornclaw opened his mouth to say something but Applefur started talking to everybody's suprise.

"I actually knew Birchfall when we were kits. We played together in the barn and became friends during the Great Journey." She explained. "We drifted apart soon after but I admired him for his selflessness and how easily he talked to cats. Ferncloud would be proud."

Other cats spoke up, his clanmates such as Blossomfall, Mousewhisker and Thornclaw talked about him and other cats that grew friendly with him said a few words before everybody settled for the vigil.

# [15] Harespring

Harespring jumped as two cats snickered behind him. Spinning around the brown and white tom faced Darkstripe and Thistleclaw. He tried to yowl a warning to his friends but he realised they were gone.

"What did you do to them?" He snarled.

"You fell asleep." The skinny black tom answered, blood trickling from an old slash in his neck.

Harespring shook his head in disbelief as the two cats stepped towards him. "This isn't the Dark Forest."

"You're right." Thistleclaw's amber eyes burned into his, the forest got destroyed and we were chased out by StarClan warriors."

"Good." Harespring spat in the grizzled tom's face.

"We can help you." Darkstripe said, yellow teeth flashing in the dark.

"Help me with what?" He snapped.

"We'll help you prove to those mouse-hearts that you're the leader they need." Thistleclaw rumbled. "And together we'll take revenge on the clans for what they did to you."

"Who said I want to be leader?" He yowled, glaring into the tom's amber, undead eyes. "Nobody wants to take revenge on the clans!"

"We see it in your eyes." Darkstripe spoke up. "You want to be admired, thats why you came running to us in the first place."

"I'm not making that mistake again." Harespring whispered, his voice caught in his throat.

"You can't change your destiny Harespring." The dark cat continued.

The living cat stomped his paw and turned to walk away. "I'm not interested."

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Harespring jolted awake and his eyes darted around, worried that someone spotted him but no cat did. Sighing, he stretched his legs as the light of dawn glowed through the trees. The other cats got to their paws too, mumbling and shaking their stiff paws.

Feeling guilty for falling asleep he helped Thornclaw dig the grave for the deceased tom, as they were digging the skinny tom tried not to think about his encounter with the dark forest warriors. They soon finished and the cats carefully nudged Birchfall's body in, they soon smoothed the soil back over, his striped pelt disappeared for the last time.

"So what now?" Larkwing was hesitant to break the silence.

"We could head to the mountains?" Tigerheart suggested.

"It's too dangerous." Dovewing quietly protested.

"There's cats who knew the clans." Thornclaw pointed out. "And we could see for miles at the top, we're sure to spot somewhere else to go.

"What about the old territory?" Harespring asked

"It's gone." The golden tabby answered, "Destroyed by twolegs."

They set off.

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The atmosphere was different. The cats stuck to their ex-clans. They were silent, no conversations, no admiring their surroundings. Perhaps they were chilled at the thought that any moment the group could be mourning their deaths.

Reaching the bottom of the mountain they followed the path up. Cold wind ruffled their fur. They stopped for a while, Whiskernose

catching a mountain hare, it wasn't much but each cat got one or two bites. They were all tired but there was nowhere to sleep.

"Are we almost there?" Blossomfall asked over the howling of the wind.

"Not quite." Dovewing shouted back.

Trudging through snow, the cats scaled a scree, Harespring helped pull Minnowtail up who was scrambling with fear, kicking small rocks down the mountain. Once everyone was safe they continued on, cats were mumbling that they should turn back but as they were about to Harespring spotted a pair of felines up ahead.

"Hello?" He shouted.

The cats headed towards them.

"Gray! What should we do!" One of the strangers yelled.

Although Harespring could hear them he heard the cat who who he assumed was Gray.

"Gray! Screech!" Dovewing shouted. "It's me, Dovewing!"

"Dovewing!" The two mud-covered cats padded cautiously towards them. "What are you doing here? Is this your clan?"

"Its a long story." The fluffy grey she-cat answered the tabby. "Can you take us to the cave?"

The two cats cautiously eyed the group before waving his tail to beckon them. The group made their way through the growing snowstorm. Harespring shivered as his paw sunk down into the snow. Soon he could hear a rumble from what he could assume was water.

Gazing up, a giant waterfall soon came into view. Some cats gasped in awe at the sight. They stepped through the entrance and into the giant cave, Harespring strained his neck to look at the stalactites. Many cats who were sitting on jagged ledges perked their heads up.

"Are those clan cats?"

"Gray, what are they doing here?"

Whispers rose up from the tribe cats as Gray turned to Dovewing. "Settle down to catch your breath, you all look tired. I'll get Stoneteller."

Turning away the two cats disappeared into a den before emerging from the entrance with a long-legged grey tom.

"Dovewing, Breezepaw?" His eyes flashed with suprise as his amber gaze swept over the group. "What are you doing here? Is everything well in the clans?"

"Yes. The clans are safe." Dovewing answered. "Something happened and we left."

Harespring noticed several cats glare at Dovewing. She was the only one who *lef*t, did she forget the rest of her companions were exiled?

"We're trying to find somewhere to live." Breezepelt interrupted. "I had a vison to follow the rising warrior and it brought us here. Would you mind if we shelter here for a few sunrises as we figuire out what to do next?"

Harespring was surprised, he had never seen Breezepelt so calm.

"Of course." Stoneteller dipped his head. "Your clans saved us multiple times, we owe you as much."

He stepped back, calling a few young cats over. "These are our visitors, take some feathers from the eagle you caught earlier and line the spare nests."

The young cats nodded and ran off.

"Pick a spot and have some rest. Tomorrow we can talk, you're barely standing on your paws."

The exhausted cats trudged across the cave to the spare nests. A grey apprentice-aged cat finished padding the nest with feathers

and darted over to another as Harespring curled up in it, letting himself drift to sleep.

# [16] Applefur

Applefur blinked her green eyes open and stretched, digging her claws into the feathers that made up her bed. Gazing around she spotted the other cats waking up before her eyes fell on an empty nest.

Applefur's heart throbbed as she sighed, she missed her friend's presence.

*He'll be with his mother now.*

"Good morning!" Stoneteller greeted them cheerfully. "Did you all have a good rest?"

Several cats nodded or mumbled in reply, some getting to their paws.

"Would you like to join a hunting patrol?" He offered

Applefur's stomach gnawed at her insides at the mention of prey. "I'd love to!"

Other cats perked up and agreed while others shook their heads slowly blinking their sleepy eyes.

"Well, we can't take all of you." The grey cat chuckled. "Some of you can go back to sleep of perhaps talk to the others. Half of you can go with Screech and Gray, the rest of you can join Brook and Storm."

Applefur got up to join the brown she-cat along with several others. Gazing back at the cats still sitting or laying down she could spot Birchfall's kits still laying down, eyes clouded with grief.

*Poor things*

Brook and Storm lead the group across the cave. Applefur could feel the Tribe cat's fascinated and suspicious gazes against her fur. She

squinted her green eyes as the sun shone through the gaping mouth and light glittered in the waterdrops.

They pushed their way through the waterfall and the two cats lead them to a patch of mud. Brook and Storm immediately started rolling in it, oblivious to the baffled look of the ex clan cats.

"Come on." Brook beckoned with a mud-covered tail. "You need to camouflage yourselves."

The patrol exchanged glances. Applefur and Thornclaw took their first steps in. She heard Thornclaw gasp in shock of the cold sludge and saw him freeze up. Applefur hesitantly rolled in the dirt ignoring the sensation of the frigid muck pressing against her skin.

She rolled back over and immediately got back to her paws. Storm nodded in approval and Applefur's companions still had their befuddled expressions.

"Its not as bad as it looks!" Applefur lied through gritted teeth.

Minnowtail, Ratscar and Furzepelt stepped in, quickly coating themselves in mud before heading back up to solid ground.

"Let's go!" Storm guided them along a rocky path against the outer cave wall. The trail slopes downhill and the cats reach an area of flat ground.

The cats hid under a ridge of rock and Larkwing's eyes gleamed as she spotted the several rabbit holes nearby. As the molly dropped into a hunting crouch but Storm brushed a grey tail along the scarred cats shoulder.

"Stop." He ordered. "We're hunting eagles."

"Eagles?" Furzepelt spluttered.

"Eagles!" Larkwing's eyes widened in amazement.

He raises his chin and following his blue gaze the cats spotted an eagle circling overhead.

"So what do we do?" Thornclaw asked.

"We use a cat of bait, I'll do that bit." He explained. "Once the eagle flies down the rest you pile on and drag it down. Eagle hunting is extremely dangerous but I trust Brook to keep you in check."

The brown she-cat flicked her ear. "Thank you Storm, good luck."

The younger cat slipped out of hiding and padded across the plain, pretending to sniff at a rabbit burrow.

The eagle caught sight and as soon as its wing twitched Brook darted out. "Go, go!"

In that moment Applefur was transported back to when they crossed the road and Birchfall being struck by the monster. A chill ran down her spine but she forced her legs into motion.

The eagle swooped down, wings outstretched and talons ready. Storm darts out the way as the bird's claws snatched at empty air.

Brook was the first to grab the bird, digging her claws into its wing as the eagle tried to flap higher. It let out a shriek as Larkwing hooked its tail feathers. Other cats piled on and Applefur herself caught onto a wing. The bird was pulled to its ground, brown wings flailing as Brook shoved its head into the thin layer of snow.

"Snap its neck!" She yelled frantically.

Larkwing bit down on its neck, there was a crack and it lay still.

The patrol cheered and shouted, clambering off the prey. Applefur gazed in shock at the creature, this terrifying thing was taken down by them.

"That's so much food!" Thornclaw remarked, the tom's usual steady voice was full with excitement. "How do we carry it back?"

"We just drag it." Brook explained.

Larkwing carried the eagle's neck while Ratscar dragged one wing while Thornclaw took another. Brook took its tail.

"I'll stay with the others." Storm told the other Tribe cat flicking his tail towards the other cats who were gazing keenly at the moor. "They seem like they want to hunt rabbits."

"Of course!" The older cat waved her tail in farewell, leading the cats carrying the eagle away.

"Theres no more eagles. We're all clear." He led them across the heather. Before sitting the three cats down. "We'll catch a piece of prey each, tonight will be a feast!"

Furzepelt's eyes gleamed.

Applefur waved her tail frantically as she spotted a mountain hare.

"You." He beckoned to Furzepelt. "Can you chase it into her claws?" He then faced Minnowtail.

"What do I do?" Minnowtail asked.

"Try to sneak around it." The tribe cat replied. "Stay low."

Hesitantly she crouched down and quietly stalked around, the hare didn't reach, chewing on some grass.

She faced the others but Applefur could tell she wasn't fully there but Storm didn't notice. He indicated to Furzepelt who darted across the grass. The hare immediately scrambled into a run.

"Minnowtail!" The grey and white she-cat yelled as it sped into the other molly's unseathed paws.

The darker cat snapped into focus and fumbled with the prey but it broke free and dove down a nearby hole. Storm and Applefur ran over.

"Is everything alright?" Furzepelt asked. "You seemed unfocused."

"I'm fine." Minnowtail answered.

"The hares are gone..." Storm mumbled, he quickly continued as the dark grey molly ducked her head with embarrassment. "Don't

worry, we can always hunt something else."

The patrol headed further across the moor.

# [17] Icewing

Icewing was talking to Stormfur. He recognised the tom from she was a young apprentice in RiverClan, although she didn't know him that well he knew he went on a quest with his sister, Feather... something, she couldn't remember.

Breezepelt padded sheepishly up to them. "Stormfur... who was Feathertail exactly?"

*Feathertail, yes, that was her name.*

"Huh?" Stormfur must of obviously noticed the black tom's change and maturity. "She was my sister. When she was chosen by a phrophcey to go on a quest like your father I joined her. She died protecting the tribe and Crowfeather, I'm not sure if she's a StarClan spirit now or the Tribe of Endless Hunting."

"She's not a StarClan cat." Breezepelt explained. "She came to me in a vison. She had wings and glowed with a different light compared to StarClan warriors I've seen."

"Vison?" The grey tom asked. "What did she say?"

"Should I go?.." Icewing trailed off.

"You can stay if you like. This could be useful to you." The scarred tom said to her before turning back to the older tom. "She said 'follow the rising warrior'."

Icewing stayed where she was, curiosity got the better of her.

Something lit up in Stormfur's eyes. "Rising warrior... Feathertail said her phrophcey was to find the 'dying warrior'."

"What does that mean?" Breezepelt asked.

"I wonder, could it mean to go back to the *old territories?* But that's impossible!" He shook his head.

Icewing had not heard those words in ages. The words brought back strange half-remembered memories of gazing at some rocks across a river and flashes of the RiverClan nursery.

"We left because the forest was being destroyed." Stormfur spoke up again. "There'll be nothing there."

"Maybe not all of it." Breezepelt's voice was strangely calm. "We've not got any other choice."

Stormfur nodded. "I trust Feathertail. I'll be happy to ask Stoneteller what else this phrophcey could mean if you like?"

The younger tom nodded. "Icewing, could you back me up on this once I tell the rest of the group? They'll trust me more than you."

"Of course!" The molly answered, she sensed that Breezepelt was shifting uncomfortably like an apprentice who wanted to tell a denmate something private. "I'll ask the older cats if they remember the forest and I'll mention it to Stoneteller."

Breezepelt looked visibly relieved as she turned around and she heard Stormfur murmuring a 'thank you' behind her. As she padded along to Stoneteller's cave she overheard Breezepelt say something to Stormfur.

"Did my father love her?"

Icewing directly chose to block them out, this may be personal and of course none of her business. She stopped at Stoneteller's cave entrance, she still felt the curious gazes of the Tribe cats burn into her fur. She shuffled her white paws, unsure of what to do before ducking inside.

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The rocky tunnel sloped downwards and Icewing stepped out into a cave with stalactites pointing down like claws towards a pool of crisp blue water. Gazing across the pool she spotted a small section with what looked like herb piles and a sleeping space.

"This place is very sacred you know." Stoneteller raised his head

from sorting herbs.

"Oh! I'm so sorry!" Icewing tried to back away out the cave as the amber-eyed tom headed towards her.

"You must have come here for a reason." He pointed out calmly. "What is it?"

"Feathertail had visited one of us in a dream." The white molly explained. "She said 'follow the rising warrior' what do you think of that? Is it sent by your ancestors?"

"Feathertail has ties to both StarClan and the Tribe of Endless Hunting." He explained, beckoning his tail. "Come."

She sat down hesitantly by the pool beside him. He gazed at the pool of water intensely, Icewing looked into the pool to but all she could see was her white rippled form in the water and her blue eyes.

"I hear a tumbling waterfall, quite different to the one in the tribe." He mumbled before his gaze broke from the water, snapping back to reality. "Stormfur and his old companions did mention many moons ago about a phrophcey of a dying warrior."

Icewing could see her reflection wrinkle into a thinking expression. "I heard stories of a waterfall in the old territories. Do you think it means we should head there?"

"It could be but I'm not sure." He answered. "Give me a few days, our ancestors will reveal what we need to know in their own time. You are dismissed."

The white cat turned away before the grey tom spoke up again. "Icewing, who was the cat who received the vison?"

"Breezepelt." She answered, looking over her shoulder. "Id reccomended calling in Stormfur to talk as well."

"Thank you." Stoneteller dipped his head.

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The sun was beginning to set as Icewing awoke from a quick nap.

"They're back!" She heard a shout from a Tribe cat.

Thornclaw, Ratscar, Brook and Larkwing dragged a dead eagle into the cave. Behind them she recognised Minnowtail, Furzepelt, Applefur and a tribe cat she didn't know the name of, three of them were carrying rodents while a fat hare dangled from Furzepelt's jaws. A third patrol joined them, carrying a rabbit and another eagle. They added their prey to the already filled pile.

"Thats a lot of prey!" She overheard Blossomfall, her voice filled with awe.

"It'll be a feast!" Another Tribe cat added nearby.

All the cats eagerly padded over to the prey pile. Stoneteller padded out of his den too. Calling over Minnowtail the two cats sat down and shared a rabbit.

"How was the hunt?" Icewing asked the molly.

The grey and white cat's ears drooped a little. "I was paired up with Furzepelt. It didn't go well."

"What happened?" The white molly pressed.

"I just lost focus." She took a bite of the meat. "I try not to but every time I look at her and all I see is her and Mousewhisker and I just start overthinking."

"She doesn't mean to make you jealous." Icewing explained as the younger she-cat nodded. "Maybe try talking to her, just as friends. Once you get to know her you'll see past her relationship with Mousewhisker and see her for the cat she is."

"They're always together." She pointed out.

"Try joining patrols more." Icewing shrugs. "You never know, you might get a lucky moment one day."

Soon the conversation changed to discussing the different taste and

texture of the rabbit meat to the ones on the moor. Minnowtail pushed some remains away with a paw.

"Im stuffed!" She exclaimed. "Would you like to finish it?"

Icewing shook her head. Gazing around she spotted Dovewing and Ivypool still in the same spots they fell asleep in. Tigerheart was comforting the silent grey she-cat while nearby Blossomfall was comforting Ivypool.

"We should give it to them." The white she-cat whispered to Minnowtail, pointing with her tail across to the separate pairs. "They might not be eating properly.

"Yeah." She agreed.

They managed to split the remains into two chunks and carried each half over to them. Icewing dropped her piece in front of Ivypool.

"Thank you." Blossomfall gazed up at her.

Icewing nodded in response and padded away.

# [18] Ivypool

Ivypool prided herself on her resilience and determination. She survived the Dark Forest training, she survived the Great Battle, she survived her exile. She had toughened through the emotions of missing her mother, despite a lump forming in her throat every time she thought of Whitewing. But her father's death was excruciating.

This was the first time she lost someone directly related to her, it was much different than she expected. Back in ThunderClan she hoped that if Birchfall had to die it would be as an elder and peacefully in his sleep, or with his family by his side.

But no, crushed by a monster and buried in a random patch of grass, away from the trees. StarClan truly wasn't watching over them anymore.

Days had passed since that feast, perhaps a quarter-moon but she wasn't exactly sure. Gradually Blossomfall had coaxed her out of her nest and the two joined patrols together. Blossomfall was right about what she said about her first patrol, the view, scents and breeze were truly therapeutic.

Gazing over to her sister, she and Tigerheart spent their days side by side, the ex-ShadowClan cat comforting Dovewing. She guessed different cats had different ways of coping.

The clan cats were starting to intermingle with the tribe. The clan cats no longer sat in their own group in the corner of the cave.

Stoneteller padded out of his den, calling over the travelling cats. "I have something important to show you. Several of you will come. Stormfur, you come too."

Ivypool had heard from Stormfur that Breezepelt of all cats recieved a vison. Was what Stoneteller is about to say something to do with that?

She joined Blossomfall, Thornclaw, Breezepelt and several others followed the tribe leader. Several cats let out gasps of shock as Stoneteller headed out the cave. Following a relatively smooth mountain path he led them on a trail around the waterfall and to a small hill with a vast view.

"I believe your Rising Warrior phrophcey may be referring to your old home." He explained. "Although the Tribe of Endless Hunting have been quite vague."

Whispers of excitement rose in the group. They hushed down as the leader spoke up again. Ivypool stretched her neck to gaze at the land in the distance.

"Stormfur, can you see it?" He turned to the grey tom.

The long-furred feline squinted. "I see the fields we travelled through. I think I see the forest much further away but there's so much twolegplace."

The travelling cats were chattering with excitement. Ivypool knew they couldn't stay in the mountains forever. Her mother had told her about the few memories she had as a kit in the old ThunderClan camp.

"What state was the territory in when you left?" The tribe leader asked Stormfur.

"The forest was being destroyed but maybe RiverClan's territory wasn't damaged as much." His gaze turned to the clouds. "If StarClan called them there they must have done it for a reason."

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Ivypool sat down beside Mousewhisker and Blossomfall. Stormfur was addressing the whole group about the next and hopefully the last.

"When you reach the forest try to find a place called Mothermouth." He instructed them. "Do any of you know where that is?"

Thornclaw raised his tail and the grey cat nodded before he

continued. "Im it is a cave called the Moonstone, its what we could use to talk to StarClan."

He padded away and the cats headed towards their nests. Ivypool curled up and she heard Blossomfall hiss into her ear.

"My parents said that the forest was destroyed."

"What?" Ivypool rolled over onto her back, gazing up at her friend.

"I overheard my mother telling Briarlight about the forest." The tortoiseshell explained. "She said that according to my father ThunderClan's trees were completely cut down."

Ivypool's heart sank. "Perhaps they grew back?"

"Tree stumps don't grow back, every cat knows that, Ivypool." Blossomfall sighed. "I'm skeptical about the whole phrophcey thing."

"Feathertail didn't appear as a StarClan cat." Ivypool pointed out. "I'm as unsure as you are but maybe we'll finally find somewhere to settle down, spirit guidance or not."

"I'll give it a chance." Blossomfall nodded before curling up in her nest. "Goodnight Ivypool."

Ivypool sighed, closing her blue eyes. She felt Blossomfall's back against hers.

# [19] Harespring

Harespring gulped down a mouthful of rabbit. The travelling cats were encouraged to eat a lot to give them energy for the journey.

"Thank you so much. For everything, Stoneteller." He saw Icewing bow her head in respect to the grey tom.

"Happy to help." Stoneteller replied. "The clan cats have helped us in the past, we are simply returning a favour. I think most of the tribe would agree."

The brown and white tom sat up, satisfied with the food he had eaten, he didn't want to eat so much it would give him a stomach ache.

Soon the other travelling cats gathered around the cave entrance, eager for the journey ahead. Stormfur and Stoneteller padded up to talk to them.

"There seems to be no eagles around." Stormfur reported. "But if you do take shelter until they pass."

"I wish you well on your journey." Stoneteller added.

"Wait." Larkwing blurted out, ears folded back in hesitation. "I... I'd like to stay with the tribe if that's okay with you." She turned to her travelling companions. "We're on a journey to find a new home, I think I've found mine here.

Harespring searched for the reactions on the other cats' faces but they simply looked friendly and understanding.

"Of course you can, Larkwing!" Furzepelt nodded.

Other cats chimed in with encouragement and the pale brown tabby clearly looked relieved.

Larkwing looked over at Stoneteller who called her over with his

tail. "We'll be happy to have you, Larkwing. But I'd like to make sure, being a member of the tribe. It's not easy work."

"I've thought it through and discussed it with a few of the tribe." The she-cat answered.

"Very well." Stoneteller dipped his head. "Lark that Glides on Wing. Welcome to the Tribe of Rushing Water."

Lark's eyes teared up with joy as the cats around her chanted her name, before she turned to her former companions for the last time.

"Thank you. I hope you find the home you're looking for. I really do. I'll miss you all." She turned to the ex-WindClan warriors. "Maybe we'll meet again, who knows?"

She headed over to the tribe cats who beckoned to her a place where she could sit.

"Good luck!" A tribe cat called to the travelling cats.

More cats joined in as the group headed through the waterfall. Harespring blinked as the sunlight blinded him for a heartbeat

They started on their journey down the mountain. Harespring heard some shouts and yells behind them and turned around quickly worrying that something bad had happened or Lark had suddenly changed her mind, but it was just some to-be's and some of the younger cats.

"Goodbye!" A dark brown tom with a pale underbelly yelled. A silver and white tom beside him waved his tail frantically.

"Get back here!" He heard an older she-cat snap, he assumed she was one of younger cats' mother or mentor. The travelling cats chuckled.

Harespring sought out Whiskernose and Ratscar but the the dark brown tom was ranting about staying safe in the mountains, how clumsy younger cats were and how he wouldn't be surprised if an eagle picked one of them of the mountain. Whiskernose was nodding along, pretending to look interested. Harespring then

decided it was probably best not to join in.

Instead he decided to simply admire the view.

"Hey Mousewhisker! Watch this!"

Harespring's gaze snapped to Furzepelt who leapt forward and landed on some stones, skidding down a mountain.

"Furzepelt!" Blossomfall yelled in alarm while Mousewhisker laughed.

The start of journey was relatively smooth. There were no eagles about and apart from a few stumbles and falls they were relatively uninjured. But Harespring knew this was about to change when he spotted a large patch of snow not to far down the mountain, sheltered from the sun.

Tigerheart took a leap and slid down the snow, his tail whipping frantically as he fought for balance. He tumbled head over paws until he dissapeared into a lump of snow.

Harespring heard Ivypool, a usually stoic and serious cat inhale sharply while even Breezepelt was struggling to hide a smirk.

"Tigerheart! Are you alright!" Dovewing shouted.

The dark brown tabby's head soon remerged. "I'm fine!" He laughed.

Harespring was knocked aside as Mousewhisker bounded past him, rolling down the slope, Ivypool and Blossomfall not to far behind him.

Several more cats joined in as Harespring watched.

"You should give it a shot!" Applefur suggested, stopping beside him.

The brown and white tom shook his head. "I'll leave the younger cats to enjoy it."

"Harespring, you're still a young cat." The molly pointed out.

"They're the same age as you, some even older."

"I..." Harespring started before staring at his paws.

"You don't need to be so serious all the time. I know a lot has happened recently but I think its good to relax and have a laugh once in a while." The mottled brown feline continued

"Okay." He took a step forward. "I'll give it a go."

He pressed his paw into the snow, shivering as it sunk through. It was slightly more solid than on the moors many tail-legnths below.

He leapt forward, landing on his side as he slid across the snow. He felt the wind against his fur as he slid past Mousewhisker and Ivypool who were cheering him on, narrowly avoiding Blossomfall a heartbeat later.

"Tigerheart!"
"Slow down!"

He spotted Tigerheart struggling out the deep patch of snow and desperately tried to slow himself down, digging his claws into the snow. Tigerheart let out a yelp as the thin tom crashed into him.

Harespring pulled himself out of the snow, shaking it off his whiskers. Hid heart was pounding.

"Are you alright?" He turned to face the tabby tom.

Tigerheart's fur was on end, his chest was puffed up and the lean tom worried that he had irritated or scared him.

"Harespring." He laughed. "I wasn't expecting that! Especially from you!"

The brown and white tom relaxed, chuckling along with him. He gazed up at Applefur, raising his tail to reassure her everything was alright.